National Convention of Economists held in Delhi

*312. SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE:
SHRI O. J. JOSEPH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a national convention of economists and social scientists was held in Delhi on August 31 and September 1, 1985;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the convention spelt out an alternative economic strategy for sustained growth of the economy with stability; and

(c) what are the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): (a) to (c) The Hon'ble Members are presumably referring to the two-day meeting of some economists in Delhi on "Current Economic Policies and Alternatives" on 31st August and 1st September, 1985. According to Newspaper reports, the Plan worked out by the economists calls *inter alia*, for setting up an annual fund to be utilised for employment generation through development programmes. The suggestions to raise the fund include direct taxation of the rural rich and mopping up of a part of the black money through taxes.

Government is guided by the policy framework in the Five Year Plans. The National Development Council at its recent meeting has approved the strategy of economic development in the Seventh Five Year Plan 1985—1990. The Seventh Plan document was placed on the Table of both Houses of Parliament on 4th December, 1985.

Export of Wheat

*313. SHRI S. W. DHABE:
SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what quantity of wheat was exported during the year 1984-85 and upto 31st October, 1985;

(b) what are the countries to which it was exported and at what rate;

(c) whether it is a fact that some quantity of wheat exported was found substandard and was rejected by the importing countries; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) 32,412 M.T. wheat was exported during 1984-85. Wheat exports during April—October, 1985 were of the order of 2,83,144 M.T.

(b) wheat has been exported to USSR, to drought affected African countries; and to Vietnam. Exports to African countries were as gift and to Vietnam as commodity loan. Exports to USSR took place at the then prevailing international prices.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Bumper Tea Crop

*314. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a bumper tea crop is expected this year; and

(b) what fresh efforts have been made to popularise Indian tea in foreign markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI KHURSHID ALAM KHAN): (a) In the Tea Marketing Policy for 1985 a production target of 655 million kgs. has been fixed which is likely to be achieved.

(b) Government have recently sanctioned a uninational cum brand promotion compaign in the Middle East on a pilot basis. This is an addition to recent efforts to check misrepresentation of Darjeeling tea and promote the image of Indian tea as quality tea. Tea Board's normal schemes provide assistance for brand promotion in warehousing abroad as well as CCS on value added teas.

Maternity benefits, child care and Welfare services for Female Agricultural workers

*315. SHRI RAMSINGBHAI PATALIYABHAI RATHVAKOLI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what are the existing plans and schemes for providing maternity benefits child care and welfare services for famale agricultural workers in the country;

(b) whether any guidelines exist or have recently been issued in this regard;

(c) how far it is being carried out and being implemented in Gujarat and various other States;

(d) how much amount had been given for the purpose to Gujarat and other States during Ist January, 1983 to 31st October, 1985;

(e) whether Government have received some concrete proposals for providing more such benefits in this field; and

(f) if so. what are the details thereof and what action is proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI T. ANJAIAH): (a) to (b) Maternity benefits are regulated under the provisions of the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and under the scheme of the Employees State Insurance Act. 1948. The Maternity Benefit Act is applicable to every establishment being a factory, mine or plantation and to every establishment where persons are employed for the exhibition of equestarian, acrobatic and other performances. But the State Government may, with the approval of the Central Government, declare that all or any of the provisions of the Act shall apply also to any other establishment or class of establishments, industrial, commercial or agricultural. So far as the Central Government is concerned, in May, 1984 the State Governments were requested to consider extension of the provisions of Act to agriculture farms organised on commercial scale. There has, however, been no positive response from the State Governments so far. The initiative for extending the benefits of the Act, therefore, primarily rests with the State Governments. So far as the agriculture workers are concerned, including female workers, their interests are primarily guarded by the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act and Minimum Wages Act. Under these Acts no guidelines exist for child care or welfare services.

The maternity benefits under the Employees State Insurance Act also are admissible only to the insured persons and do not extend to the female agriculture workers.

In view of the above, the question of allocating funds to the State Governments for maternity, child care and welfare services for female agriculture worker does not arise. From the Ministry of Labour, no funds have been allocated for the purpose during the period 1-1-83 to 31-10-85. Also there is no proposal in the Ministry from any State Government for